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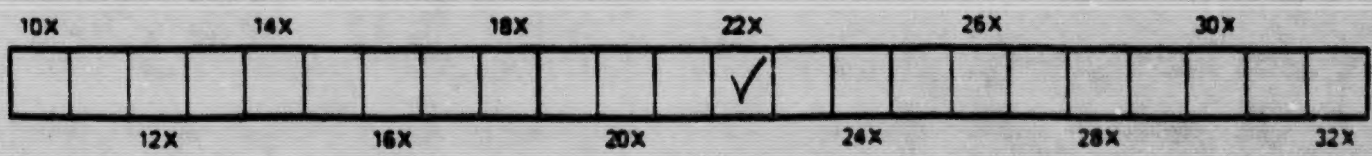

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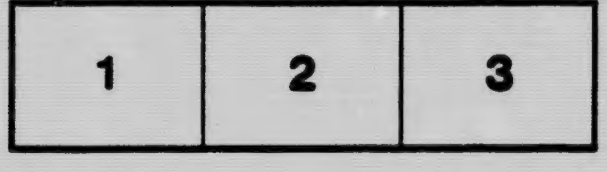

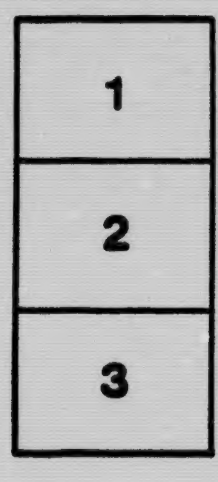

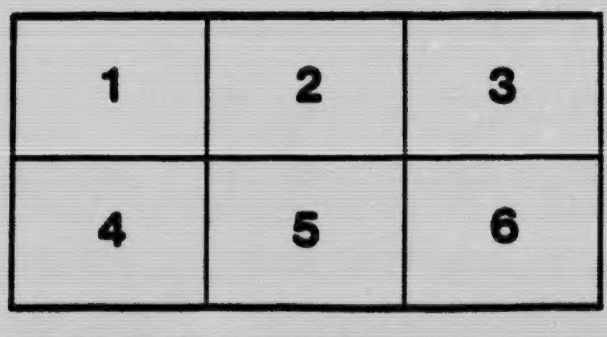

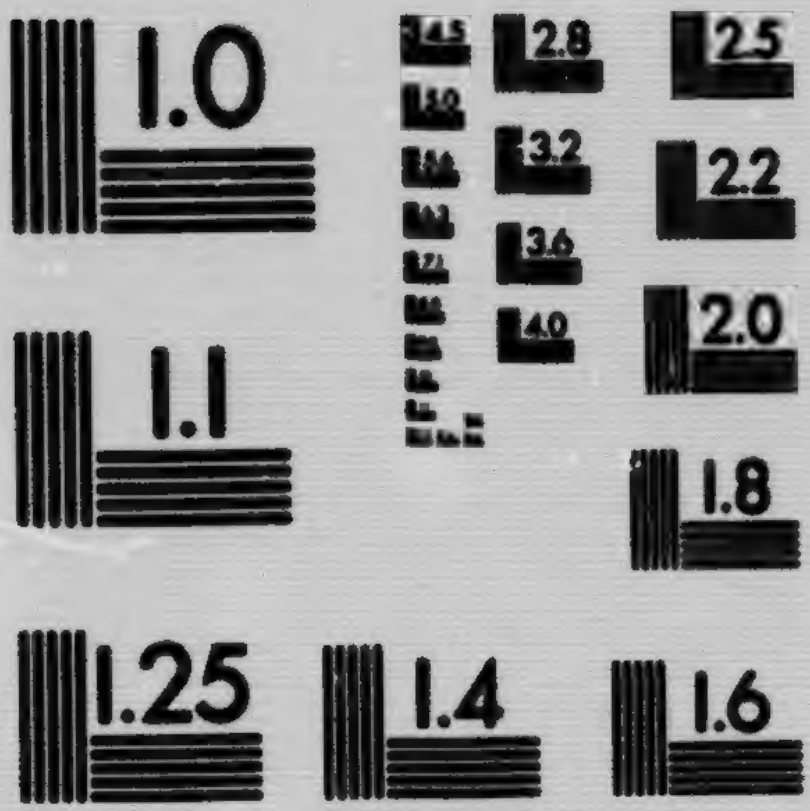

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1919-(3)

Ontario Provincial Liberal Party

High Cost of Living
Public Ownership
"Hydro"
Non-Partisan Election Laws

1919

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Ontario Provincial
Liberal Party

High Cost of Living
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Non-Partisan Election
Laws

1919

HIGH COST OF LIVING

There is no question of greater importance than the High Cost of Living. So far as the Liberal Party is concerned its policy to cope with the situation is outlined in the following resolution:

Moved by Mrs. P. G. Kiely, Toronto, seconded by Miss Catharine Frawley, Toronto.

> "That having regard to the present high cost of living and the increasing burden upon the working classes and those in receipt of limited incomes, due to the high cost of the necessaries of life, this Convention condemns the Ontario Government for its failure to deal with this matter and its abandonment of the investigation and prosecution of the illegal combines formed to limit competition and to enhance prices.
>
> We declare for the Government control and regulation of cold storage plants, abattoirs and stock yards, the prosecution of the old combines—the thorough investigation of the combines and profiteers which have during the period of the war and are still making unfair and illegal profits at the expense of the consumer."

Government Protects Combines.

The responsibility for the failure to prosecute the illegal combines in restraint of trade undertaken by J. Walter Curry, when Crown Attorney in Toronto in 1906, lies at the door of the Conservative Government. Profiteering might have been nipped in the bud at that time, but owing to the Government's alliance with the Big Interests Mr. Curry's personal attempts to punish the wrong-doers were called off and they have since become bolder and bolder until prices have reached the present prohibitive level.

In 1905 Mr. Curry secured evidence which justified him in believing that there were combines in nearly all articles that enter into domestic and household use. When this came to his knowledge he had an investigation made to ascertain the facts. He discovered that there were combines in no less than 33 articles of domestic use. Mr. Curry recently made a direct charge against the Conservative Administration that they were responsible for the dropping of the prosecutions against these combines.

Speaking to a meeting of East York Liberals on September 17th, 1919, Mr. Curry said:—

> **"I charge that the Government of the Province of Ontario in power at that time (1905-6) knew that there were combinations in restraint of trade in respect to every article that went into a man's house or into the household, and that there was sufficient influence brought to bear to cause the Government to desire the prosecutions to end, and the prosecutions did end with my resignation."**

Mr. Curry said that in dealing with the high cost of living at present most people thought of the cost of food. It was not confined, however, to those necessaries of life. Every article that entered the household and went to ensure the comfort of the home, had been without doubt for years the subject of combination and profiteering. He told at length of the endeavours he had made to have the combinations in restraint of trade prosecuted during his occupancy of the position of Crown Attorney for the City of Toronto.

The Plumbers' Combine.

Information came to him of a combine with respect to plumbers' supplies and the manner in which plumbers were carrying on their business. The information was found to be correct, and, as a result, he started prosecutions in the Police Court. The first prosecution served as a small fire for a great conflagration. As a result of the first prosecution a search was made of the premises of the Plumbers' Association and the documents taken. These investigations began late in 1904 and continued until 1906. Mr. Curry says:—

> "The plumbers' combination, although they suffered perhaps the brunt of the punishment that was inflicted, was not any worse than, if as bad, as many of the other combinations in respect to which information was obtained and in respect to which investigations to a certain extent took place and which were subsequently stopped."

Sharing the Rake-off.

Mr. Curry explained the procedure when a man called for tenders in those days to have the plumbing done in a house. The tenders had to go before the Plumbers' Association. If a dealer could show that he had formerly done the work for that man he

was instructed to put in the lowest tender. All other plumbers put in bids a little higher. After the board of the Association had determined what the price of the lowest tender should be a percentage was added, which was for the Association. After this percentage was fixed a certain amount was added for each of the other men who made higher tenders. In one instance it worked out that seven other plumbers who put in tenders were each allowed $500 on the lowest tender for a certain contract. The Plumbers' Association was affiliated with the Plumbers' Supply Association, and the latter would not supply any plumber who was not a member of the first mentioned body. The Plumbers' Supply Association was fined $5,000 and smaller fines of from $2,500 down to $200 were imposed on others connected therewith.

The Tack Combine.

Another combine was the Tack Combine. In one case where a man had dared to be independent they pressed him until he finally went to the wall, and when he turned and asked if they would buy him out after they had practically ruined his business *he was told that he could "fry in his own fat".*

Agreements seized by Mr. Curry required dealers to make statutory declarations as to the price at which they would sell their goods. These prices were fixed by the Association. In one instance a fine of $2,000 was imposed for cutting prices.

Notwithstanding these facts the Government now in power obtained the opinion of counsel that no conviction should be obtained against these combinations.

Liberal Action Taken in House.

The Liberals in the House fought against the abandonment of the prosecutions from the beginning. In 1913 they endeavoured to get the Attorney-General's Department to take action by moving the following resolution, but the Government turned it down:—

> "The action of the Government in abandoning the prosecution of alleged combines and failing to prosecute others notwithstanding the advice of the Crown Attorney of the City of Toronto that these combines were violating the provisions of the Criminal Code, the decision of the Police Magistrate of the City of Toronto in committing the defendants for trial, and the finding of true bills by the Grand Jury in the only cases submitted to them, amounts to a protection of these combines and the encouragement of others;

"This House requests the Government to take such prompt and vigorous action in the premises as may be necessary to protect the public interests."

Inaction of the Government.

What has been the attitude of the Government? Since 1906 evidence of all these cases has been in their hands and yet from that time down to the present not a single combine has been prosecuted. If during all that time there has been no prosecution for combining in restraint of trade or the enhancing of prices the blame lies at the door of the Conservative Government which has failed to do its duty.

In 1917 the Liberals condemned the Government for abandoning the investigation and prosecution of the combines in the following resolution:—

Moved by Mr. J. C. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Dewart:—

"In view of the present high cost of living and the increasing burden upon the working classes and those in receipt of limited incomes, due to the high cost of the necessaries of life, this House condemns the abandonment by the Government of the investigation and prosecution of the illegal combines formed to limit competition and enhance prices, notwithstanding the advice of the then Crown Attorney of the City of Toronto that these combines were violating the provisions of the Criminal Code, and that the Government was in possession of the necessary evidence to proceed with prosecution; and this House is of the opinion that these illegal combines to enhance prices still exist in the Province, and that it is the duty of the Government to investigate all alleged illegal combinations in restraint of trade and to prosecute vigorously all those which appear to be violating the law, and to take all such further action as may protect the consumer against the cost of the necessaries of life being unduly enhanced by monopolies and combines which unfairly limit that competition."

By a vote of 54 to 25 the Government voted this down.

Mr. Elliott maintained that the Government was lax in the performance of its duty in prosecuting where there appear to be the existence of combines to enhance prices of the necessaries of life.

Premier Hearst regarded the resolution as a want of confidence motion, and assured the House that the Attorney-General's Department could be depended upon to do its duty. Mr. Hartley Dewart declared that the Premier's "smug platitudes"

were not sufficient to defend the Attorney-General for his lack of alertness in prosecuting combines.

The Government stands for the protection of the Combines—the Opposition for the protection of the people.

Liberal Solution of Profiteering.

The Liberals have declared for the Government control and regulation of Cold Storage Plants, Abattoirs and Stock Yards, as well as the prosecution of combines and a thorough investigation into the profiteering which existed during the war and the illegal profits that are still being made at the expense of the consumer.

Proof of War Profiteering.

The most outstanding proof that there has been gross profiteering in connection with the manufacture of munitions during the war lies in the fact that a man in Hamilton undertook to pay back to the Government the whole profit that he received over and above what was a fair and average profit after allowing for over-head charges, and **he returned to the Dominion Government as the excess profit he was able to make on one contract $750,000.** With such proof that profiteering was going on it was the duty of the Government to investigate and of the Attorney-General to prosecute, but no action was taken.

Cold Storage Controlled by Five Firms.

In regard to Cold Storage Plants an investigation shows that there are five firms in the city of Toronto that are controlling the cattle market. Toll has to be paid to the combination before drovers can deal with the cattle market, and the **producers get less and the consumers pay more** as a consequence.

Government Protects Big Interests.

Mr. Dewart, in the Legislature last session (1919), called the attention of the House to this combination and urged as a remedial measure that it was the duty of the Government to take over and operate these plants so as to see that the people of the Province get a fair deal. The Government turned a deaf ear to this entreaty.

So far as the Liberal Party is concerned it stands for the Government operation of slaughter houses and abattoirs and for Government control and regulation of cold storage in the Province.

The action taken in the United States to prevent "unconscionable profits" and against the hoarding of fuel, clothing, food and other necessaries of life, the regulation of cold storage plants and the control of wheat shipments, shows what can be done by a progressive and intelligent Administration.

A Grave Scandal.

The break-down of the Provincial Attorney-General's Department is a serious scandal in face of the unnecessary hardships suffered by the people of Ontario on account of similar profiteering in this Province.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The Liberal Party stands for resistance to the encroachments of private corporations in the exploitation of public utilities, and for the elimination of private monopoly in public services.

The Liberal Policy.

The Liberal policy is set out in the resolution passed at the Ontario Liberal Convention (June 26th, 1919), when, on the motion of F. Wellington Hay, M.P.P., seconded by Alderman J. G. Ramsden, it was resolved:—

"That this convention desires to place on record its belief that the interests of the people of Ontario will be advanced materially, and the public welfare safeguarded by steadfast resistance to any further encroachment of private franchise-holding corporations upon the public domain or the highways of the Province.

Believing as we do that much evil has been done by the alienation of public property to private ends, we pledge the Liberals of Ontario to the following measures:

1. The reservation of all water powers within the jurisdiction of the Government of Ontario for development so that the benefits of cheap and abundant electric energy may be extended to all parts of the Province:

2. The construction of a system of Hydro-Radial Railways throughout the Province wherever conditions warrant expectation of successful operation. In the construction of these railways there should be co-operation with the directors of the National Railways so that duplication of service shall be avoided and the Dominion and Provincial authorities may work together for the development of Province-wide systems of transportation.

3. The elimination of private monopoly of the telephone service in the chief centres of population and over wide areas of rural Ontario, and the creation ultimately of a Provincial telephone service.

4. Refusal to confer franchises hereafter upon private corporations for railway power, lighting, heating, telephone or other services requiring for their successful operation the use of the highways, or which come into competition with similar services owned and operated by public authorities.

The Moose Jaw *Times* recently said that Canada had drifted into public ownership of one thing after another, and that what was needed was a definite Public Ownership policy.

The Public Ownership and Operation of Public Utilities is the ultimate aim of the Liberal Party.

"HYDRO"

The two greatest publicly owned utilities in the Dominion of Canada are the Hydro-Electric System of the Province of Ontario and the National Railways of Canada. The Hydro-Electric System with its 225 municipal partners, its 200,000 horsepower development, its 1,600 miles of transmission line and its unrivalled record of efficient service has proved a success.

Consistent Attitude of Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party has been most consistent in its advocacy of a Public Ownership policy. The platform of the party in the 1911 elections was as follows:—

> "We believe in and will support the **public ownership and operation of public utilities**, and especially the utilisation of waterpowers throughout the Province for the generation and distribution of electricity; also the acquisition and operation of telephone lines."

Hearst's Deathbed Promises.

The Hearst Government, on the eve of the elections, pretends to favour vigorous support of Hydro-Electric development, and cheap light and power for the farmers. They also promise the conversion of certain railway lines into Hydro-Electric lines.

Conservatives Opposed to Hydro System.

This sudden interest in Hydro development is too transparent to deceive any intelligent electorate. It was only in 1913 that the Government voted down a Liberal motion dealing with the conservation of our water powers, the extension of the Hydro-Electric System to the farms of the Province and the development of a system of Hydro-Electric Radial Railways.

The motion speaks for itself:—

"1. This House approves of the policy of the Province retaining control over the water powers of the Province, in order thereby to assist in securing the benefits of cheap electric power for all sections of the Province.

2. That the conditions of farm life would be substantially improved if the **farmers** of the Province could secure the **benefit of electric power and light** in connection with the operation of their farms on a satisfactory financial basis, and and that it is the duty of the Government to promote so far as practicable the extension of power and light services throughout the rural sections of the Province by rendering assistance to rural as well as urban municipalities which desire to secure cheap power.

3. That cheap and convenient **electric railway** transportation facilities are one of the most urgent needs of many rural sections and towns of the Province, and it is the duty of the Government to assist, so far as practicable, in the development of these transportation facilities.

4. That this House will view with satisfaction prompt and vigorous prosecution of these objects by the Government and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of this Province."

A Belated Conversion.

This resolution was the first definite action taken in the Legislature by either party towards the promotion or development of Hydro Radials and cheap light and power for the farmers. The Government held over the discussion of the resolution for some weeks and then called upon their followers to vote it down. Sir William Hearst is somewhat belated in his announcement. The public will call for an explanation of the Government's stand in 1913.

Liberal Proposals in 1914.

Again in 1914 the Liberals brought the matter to the attention of the Legislature and managed to get the Government to adopt the principle of a motion urging upon the Dominion Government the importance of encouraging the construction of Hydro-Electric Radials by co-operating with the Province in the development of water powers. The Liberals wished to apply to the Dominion for a subsidy equal to that granted to steam railways, but the Government would not go so far.

Since the inauguration of the Hydro-Electric movement the Liberal Party has stood for the extension in every feasible way of **light, power and telephone services to the farms** of the Province, but has always been opposed by the Conservative Government. In view of their past attitude no faith can be put in the Government's sudden right-about-face.

No Public Ownership Plank in Hearst Platform.

The Hearst Government has no public ownership plank in its makeshift platform, whilst a reference to the resolution passed at the representative Liberal convention will show that it is not only in regard to the conservation and development of water powers but in the refusal to grant franchises to private corporations for the operation of all public utilities that the Liberal Party appeals for the support of the electors.

NON-PARTISAN ELECTION LAWS

New Election Law a Disfranchising Act.

Nothing is more scandalous than the way in which the Voters' Lists have been prepared for the Provincial Election. After the enumerators had completed their work in Toronto over 26,000 names were added to the lists on appeal. The new election law has proved itself a costly failure. $5,560.00 was paid the enumerators in the bye-election in North-East Toronto when Hon. Dr. Cody was elected as Minister of Education to place 47,711 names on the Voters' Lists, and $3,383.11 in East York when Hon. Geo. S. Henry was returned as Minister of Agriculture for placing 30,606 names upon the lists.

Costly Failure.

With approximately 1,600,000 electors entitled to vote at the forthcoming election it is likely to cost the Province in the neighbourhood of $185,000 for registration alone.

Liberals against Enumeration.

When the enumeration system was suggested as a permanent measure in 1918, the Liberals protested against it in the House, and the Liberal leader, Mr. Dewart, moved a resolution that instead of this partisan system of enumeration the voters' lists should be prepared by the Municipal Assessors. The motion was as follows:—

> "And this House would respectfully represent to Your Honour that "The Ontario Election Act, 1918" should be repealed and provision made for the preparation by municipal authorities of voters lists which shall include the names of all women and men over the age of twenty-one years entitled to vote at elections to the Legislative Assembly, subject to revision under the provisions of the former law, and the holding of elections one week after nomination."

This was negatived upon a straight party vote.

First Introduced as Temporary Measure.

In 1917, when the enumeration was first introduced for the purpose of bye-elections then pending, the Attorney-General stated that the bill was only a temporary measure, and in view of this the Liberals moved a resolution that it was unwise to create new machinery for the preparation of the voters' lists and urged that the procedure already in vogue should be adhered to. This was lost on division. The Resolution was as follows:—

> "That in view of the provision already made by Government bill No. 67 for placing the names of soldiers on the voters' lists of the Province, and in view of the statement of the Attorney-General that the bill is only a temporary measure, this House is of the opinion that it is unwise to create all new machinery provided by the present bill for the preparation of voters' lists for the ensuing election, but that it is the duty of the Government to forthwith introduce a

measure providing for the placing of the names of women entitled to vote, on the voters' lists, by the procedure already authorized for placing the names of men on the lists, subject only to the necessary amendments."

Dewart Opposes Partisan Enumerators

In 1918 the Election Act, as it now stands with the exception of a few amendments in 1919, was under consideration. Dealing with the question of the appointment of enumerators, Mr. Dewart moved an amendment upon the second reading of the bill in an endeavour to keep the appointment of sub-enumerators within the jurisdiction of the Voters' Registration Board, instead of placing the appointments in the hands of the partisan Returning Officers. Mr. Dewart felt that the people would place more confidence in the Board. The Government turned this down.

Mr. Dewart further protested against the eight weeks interval between nomination and election days, and to a certain extent this protest has been heeded, as the Election Act now provides that where the lists are made up before nomination day (as in the present instance) 7 days only shall elapse between nomination day and polling day.

The Liberal Platform.

The Provincial Convention paid marked attention to the expensive system of enumeration, and in the following words called for the repeal of the law regarding enumeration, and demanded that provision should be made for the preparation of the lists by the municipal authorities in all organised districts and by the district judges in unorganised districts.

Moved by S. Ducharme, M.P.P., seconded by H. Charron, Essex North:—

> "That whereas the Liberal Party has always stood for the franchise and the right to exercise it free from partisan interference, we condemn the provision of the Ontario Election Act amendments whereby **partisan enumerators are appointed** to prepare Provincial Voters' Lists at large and unnecessary expense. **We propose the repeal** of this law, and the enactment of such provisions as will **provide for the preparation by the municipal authorities in all organised districts,** of the Ontario voters' lists, which shall include the names of all women and men entitled to vote at

the elections to the Legislative Assembly, and the appointment of the enumerators in unorganised districts by the district judges."

In the House and on the platform Mr. Dewart has pointed out that it would take only a moment's time for the assessors who know the residents of their municipalities to place upon their lists the names of all men and women eligible to vote at provincial elections. The lists would then be subject to revision in the usual way.

Partisan Enumerators.

The Government declined to revert to the old system, notwithstanding the efforts of the Liberals, and partisan officials have been given the control of whose names shall be entered on the voters' lists. The result has been that thousands of names have been left off the lists all over the Province, and in the City of Toronto the time for appeals had to be extended to permit the names of thousands of electors to be added. As a result of appeals in the South West Riding of Toronto alone, 5,000 names were added to the lists.

Attempt to Stifle Will of People.

Mr. Dewart commenting on this iniquitous system, said:—

"Any Government which needs to adopt a system such as the present enumeration system in order to stifle a fair expression of the will of the people is a Government that should not be trusted with power, and I believe the electors will show their indignation at the polls at the earliest opportunity."

At great sacrifice the freedom of the franchise has been handed down to us as a priceless right, by means of which the representative and responsible character of our democratic institutions may be preserved and the will of the people made to prevail. The Government of the Big Interests now in power has weakened the representative character of our parliamentary system in order to perpetuate Tory and class legislation. There is nothing that touches so directly the problem of unrest to-day as the action of the Government in robbing the people of the franchise.

Имеется библиотечный штамп

NINE PROVINCES OF CANADA

EIGHT NOW UNDER LIBERAL PREMIERS

Premier Bell, P. E. I. | Premier Norris, Manitoba. | Premier Martin, Saskatchewan. | Premier Stewart, Alberta. | Premier Gouin, Quebec | Premier Foster, N. B. | Premier Murray, N. S. | Premier Oliver, B. C | Hartley Dewart, K.C., Leader of Opposition in Ont.

Bring Ontario in Line